

INSTRUCTIONS

AFFORDED BY THE PRESENT WAR,

10.

TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT-BRITAIN.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

ST. ANDREW'S, on Thursday the 18th of April 1793.

BY

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SERMON, &c.

DEUTERONOMY, xxiii. 9.

*When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then
keep thee from every wicked thing.*

THE words of my text are a charge which the Almighty gave by Moses to the children of Israel. The charge implies, that, altho, ‘the Lord was ‘the Shield of their help and the Sword of their excellency,’ the aggression of enemies might interrupt their tranquillity; that they were not permitted tamely to surrender to every invader the privileges which they enjoyed as a nation; but that it was their duty to fight in defence of that unequalled happiness which the favour of heaven had conferred upon them: and the charge calls them, at such seasons especially, to abstain from the sins of the neighbouring nations, and to maintain the conduct which became ‘a peculiar people, holy unto the Lord.’

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Although the descendants of Abraham received a more immediate direction from heaven in their national concerns than was ever vouchsafed to any other people, yet we know, that He ‘ who hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, hath determined the bounds of their habitation, and that He divides to them their inheritance.’ The virtues, the vices, the passions, and the schemes of men are some of the instruments by which the Governor among the nations extends or abridges the measure of national prosperity. The blessings of peace, and the calamities of war are part of the instruction which the Father of spirits administers to his intelligent offspring. The sword, which either wisdom or folly has unsheathed, does not return to its scabbard till it has fulfilled the charge which it had received from Him; and the experience of that people to whom the words of my text were addressed, gives warning to all the nations of the earth that the judgment of the Lord, which is sent in mercy for correction, will bring destruction upon those whom it does not correct.

Being thus warranted, by the first principles of religion, to consider the Almighty as saying to every nation engaged in war, ‘ When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing,’ I shall follow the pious purpose for which our gracious Sovereign has commanded

manded us to assemble this day, by stating the lessons of righteousness which the present interruption of our national tranquillity may suggest to the people of Great Britain; and by drawing your attention, in the progress of my discourse, to the circumstances which appear to give a peculiar energy to those lessons.

FIRST, When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every approach to tumult, sedition, and disaffection.

The general principle of benevolence, which receives a particular direction from all the relations of human life, naturally extends beyond the circle of our personal connections, to embrace that political society of which we constitute a part. If we derive, from our union with other men, advantages which cannot be enjoyed in solitude, it becomes a branch of justice to repay those advantages by an attention to their interest: and if our union be constructed upon those fair and equitable principles by which their welfare and ours are inseparably linked together, the performance of this act of justice is enforced by self-love, because by seeking the good of the whole body, we enlarge or we secure those blessings of which all the members partake. Sacred history records, with high applause, numberless displays of a warm and unshaken attachment to the Common-wealth of Israel: and although the Gospel,

destined to be the religion of all nations, does not cherish a predilection for any form of Government, although, in opposition to the narrow spirit which a few often fostered, it teaches us to consider all men as our brethren, yet, with the most accurate attention to the principles of human nature, and the circumstances of the human race, this perfect system of morality does not allow the extension of benevolence to extinguish private affection, or a zeal for the good of mankind to interfere with the duties of our place. By the general influence of its doctrines, the Gospel forms that character which renders a Christian a good subject of every Government under which he enjoys protection; and in many particular precepts it enjoins those very expressions of attachment to the state, which reason and justice inculcate.

In the succession of peaceful occurrences, the very perfection of Government tends to withdraw the attention of the subjects from itself; and the great body of the people, reaping without molestation the fruits of their industry, do not feel any obligation to pursue the interest of the state as an object distinct from their own. But any circumstance which creates an apprehension that the blessings derived from a connection with the community may be impaired, enhances their value in the estimation of every good citizen, and renders him strenuous in his efforts to detain

detain them. Those interruptions of the general tranquillity, to which all large societies are exposed, remind the Members that the quiet and successful conduct of the ordinary business of life depends upon the protection of the state. Those national exertions, which the wisdom of the community sometimes judges necessary, call forth the united strength of the members to constitute that public force which may provide for the security of the whole. It is at such seasons that the state demands a return for the advantages which she confers. While certain orders of citizens are sent to expose their lives in her service, all are obliged to contribute to the expence of that service ; Individuals are required to submit their own judgment to the wisdom of the state, and their private interest to the good of the community ; and it is expected that those sentiments of public spirit, and those wishes for the national prosperity, which may be allowed to languish in times of peace, will, in times of national exertion, be vigorous and universal.

If the inhabitants of any country were ever called to remain firm and united in their attachment to the state, when the host went forth against their enemies, the war in which we are at present engaged prescribes that duty to the inhabitants of Great Britain. We are not fighting for a commercial interest, as to the value of which we might be mistaken ; for the ag-

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grandizement of a foreign Prince who might soon turn his arms against us; for a particular system with regard to the balance of power, which, after being established by our efforts, might, from a change of circumstances, prove hurtful to the liberties of Europe: But we are fighting in defence of that Constitution under which we have enjoyed security and prosperity, and in support of our existence as a free independent Nation, against enemies who have avowed by their words, and their actions, that it is their purpose to rob us of every thing which we hold dear.

Those who attained the supreme power, after the late change of Government in France, actuated by the same spirit of jealousy which we are accustomed to trace in the ancient republics, considered the new order of things as insecure while the form of Government in the neighbouring states continued dissimilar to theirs. They employed the most unremitting industry in disseminating thro' the continent of Europe what they call the principles of Liberty and Equality; and regarding Great Britain as their most formidable neighbour, they rejoiced to find some men in this Island willing to forward their designs. French emissaries were assisted by the authors of certain seditious publications in an attempt to pervert the understanding, and to poison the minds of the people. The correspondence held with various

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British Societies was boasted of in the National Assembly ; and it was there falsely and flanderously said, ‘ the hearts of the British people are with us ; their rulers only are against us.’—For some time it was believed, that the good sense and the unequalled happiness of the Nation, were of themselves sufficient to counteract the mischievous tendency of the despicable publications which were industriously circulated. But when Societies breathing sedition multiplied in all the large towns of Great Britain ; when every snare was laid to inveigle the uninformed into associations, the deep designs of which they did not penetrate ; and when a scheme was held forth to the public for imitating the Primary Assemblies of France, and holding a convention which might over-awe the legislature, all wise and good men began to be alarmed. Our rulers, with that vigilance which became their station, exerted the powers entrusted to them in checking the diffusion of opinions subversive of all government, and in detecting the correspondence held with that country from whence those opinions had been imported. Many respectable members of the legislature, who had been accustomed at other times to oppose administration, gave their cordial support to the measures adopted for the defence of the constitution. A great part of those who had formerly expressed a strong desire of obtaining what appeared to them a salutary reform,

wisely and temperately suspended their application to Parliament till more peaceful times ; and wishing only to improve that venerable fabric which they admired, refused to hold any alliance with men who threatened, with rude and wicked hands, to pull it down. Almost every community in Britain declared that they felt themselves happy, that they repudiated French principles, and that they held in abhorrence the conduct which those principles had produced. A great and flourishing Nation lifted up its voice ; and the murmurs of the discontented were drowned. They had been loud, and busy, and turbulent ; and they thought they were many. But when the number of them was taken, they appeared contemptible. Overawed by the sentences, which their country, by the mouth of many respectable juries, pronounced upon their accomplices, some of them retired to France ; and those who remained, were obliged either to retract their assertions, or to hold a language less obnoxious to the laws, and less pernicious to the minds of their countrymen.

But altho' internal tranquillity was in this manner restored about the end of last year to Great Britain, the rulers of France did not desist from pursuing their object. By a decree of the National Convention in November, they had published their resolution to support the inhabitants of every country who were disaffected to the government under which they lived,

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and their readiness to come, and according to their phrase, give fraternity to all who invited them. Presuming upon the success of those arts which they employed in their correspondence with Britain, they entertained the hope of receiving such an invitation from hence ; or if that should not be openly given, they had no doubt of exciting so general a disaffection as might furnish a pretext for their visiting this happy Island, and might facilitate their operations. But when the general will of the Nation was unequivocally express'd in opposition to their views ; when all ranks of men, satisfied with the precious inheritance which they had received from their Fathers, rejected the fatal present which foreigners offered to bring ; when the people of Great Britain, reposing under that Tree of Liberty which has struck its roots deep in this Island, and after having stood many a storm, spreads its branches laden with fruit to be gathered by the rich and the poor, said that they would not permit a spurious, unhealthy, poisonous shoot to be planted in their borders.—When the intrigues of France were discovered and defeated, her rulers threw off the mask : and altho' we had been content with expressing to one another the emotions of pity, and horror, and indignation, which their atrocious deeds excited in every humane breast, without taking any active part in their domestic concerns, they repaid this dignified neutrality by a

declaration of war. With the spirit of rapine and plunder, which, in former times, drove the fierce hordes of the North to desolate the interior parts of Europe, they had sent forth their armies to subsist by exacting contributions, and by exercising every species of cruelty and outrage, in the towns of Flanders, and on the confines of Germany, to which they gave fraternity; and they fixed their eyes upon the wealth of Holland and Britain as a rich booty. With a spirit of universal conquest more formidable to the liberties of Europe, than the ambition of Louis XIV. which our Fathers combated with renown and with success, they assumed the office of judging between rulers and their subjects; of prescribing what antient treaties should be observed, and what should be exploded; and of explaining the rights of nations according to their own ideas of the rights of Man. Their declaration of war against us turned upon the measures adopted by the legislature for preventing the introduction, or checking the progress of French principles in this country, and upon other matters of internal regulation, for which surely we were not accountable to any other nation: and they ordered their armies to penetrate into Holland, because the States-General would not, in obedience to the mandate of France, relinquish a right which had been the foundation of their commerce; and which from the first days of their

republic, had been tenaciously held by themselves, and recognized by their allies. The invasion of the Dutch territories was a step in the progress to Britain ; for it was the avowed purpose of our enemies, after conquering Holland, to pass over into this Island : and had they been able to execute the whole extent of their purpose, they would have imposed by their swords that fraternity which we would not ask, and they would have numbered Great Britain amongst the departments of France.

An aggression so unprovoked excited universal indignation. Even the few who had said that the progress of French principles gave no just cause of alarm, admitted the necessity of resisting the progress of French arms. The measures proposed by the Executive Government for prosecuting the war have received almost an unanimous support in Parliament : and the alacrity with which the host went forth, the rapidity with which the different corps, destined for the internal defence of the country, are receiving their complement of men, the bounties offered by communities, and by individuals, to those who shall engage in his Majesty's service, and the provision made by private liberality for the widows and children of those who may fall, clearly demonstrate the sense of the nation. We submit to the expence of our armaments, to the temporary stagnation of commerce and manufactures, and to the other evils in-

cident to war, as a price wisely paid for the security of those invaluable interests which are now at stake. We received an early omen of future successes when the son of our beloved King, at the head of a chosen band, landed on the coast of Holland in time to revive the spirits and invigorate the exertions of our allies, and to witness the first repulse of our enemies. That repulse has been followed, in quick succession, by various defeats, which have compelled them to renounce their conquests, and to measure back their steps; and from all that has happened since the war began, we entertain the most sanguine hopes, that, having been called by the first law of nature to arm in defence of that happiness which the favour of Heaven has conferred, we shall obtain, before we desire to lay down our arms, all that it is fair and honourable for this nation to demand.

Such are the sentiments with which the present war has inspired the people of Great Britain. They are so naturally suggested, and so strongly inculcated by the circumstances in which "the host goeth forth "against our enemies," that, in illustrating this first lesson, I have had the satisfaction of giving the history of what is, rather than of exhorting you to what ought to be: And I have only further to say upon this head, that a speedy and a happy termination of the war depends, under God, upon a continuance of the spirit with which it has begun. Our enemies have no other hope of success than that which they

they may derive from creating a division in our interests and our wishes. We understand that they have been endeavouring to avail themselves of those circumstances in the political state of Ireland, which render that part of the Empire more accessible to their intrigues than any other. In Britain too, they will leave no method untried to excite a spirit of disaffection; and they may still perhaps find, even in this happy country, some auxiliaries. For altho' the most uninformed will not listen to the emissaries of France, if they should attempt to paint her present resources in a formidable light, and altho' the flourishing state of our finances has prevented that kind of murmuring which sometimes arises from the imposition of new taxes, yet, as many orders of men must suffer, during the course of the war, from the interruption of commerce, there will not be wanting a popular topic of declamation. The insults which may be offered to our coasts, the occasional captures of our Ships, and the more serious disasters which may befall us even in a successful war, will be magnified by those who delight in foreboding evil, and will furnish the discontented with a specious ground of complaint against the Executive Government. The plans, by which speculative men have thought that our constitution might be rendered more perfect, will be brought forward for the purpose of teaching those who cannot speculate, that they ought to be dif-

dissatisfied. The vigilance of Administration in detecting incendiaries, and the wholesome severity of law in punishing treason, will be represented as incompatible with liberty; and every regulation of police, every exercise of authority which happens to be unpopular, will be laid hold of, as a pretext for exciting the inhabitants of large towns to resist the civil magistrate.

The good sense of the people of Great Britain cannot fail to discern the pernicious tendency of such attempts to practise upon their minds, and will regard with becoming jealousy all from whom they proceed. A season of danger and alarm, and national exertion, is a time when the laws should reign supreme; when the attention of Government should not be distracted from its care for the public safety; when every man should be found at his post, waiting in silence to receive the orders which may be given him, prompt in yielding obedience, and ready to lend to the community all his talents, and all his vigour. At such a time, all who love their country, forgetting former quarrels, without recrimination, and with undivided zeal in the common cause, should encourage one another under every hardship, and every effort which may be necessary to repel the invader. It is madness for those who are within, to create a confusion which will assist the operations of the foe without. It is vain to expect, amidst the din of arms, the calm discussion

discussion, which any alteration of an established Government requires. When we have turned aside the dagger which is planted at our breast, we shall have leisure to canvass schemes of improvement, and if they are found reasonable, we may adopt them without hazard. But the example of our enemies may convince us, that it is not an easy matter to pull down one form of Government, and to erect another in its stead. Altho' French philosophy had boasted that she was able to direct the storm which she had raised; her feeble voice has hitherto been drowned by the uproar of a savage multitude, and by the cabals of mean unprincipled men. And after all the crimes which have been committed, and the misery which has been endured in France, it rests with those who have the power of the sword to decide, whether the present convulsion shall terminate in some form of despotism, or in a fair and equal Government.

Our neighbours have compelled us to call them our enemies. But they shall not compel us to adopt the sentiments with which they wage war. They did not set an example in former times of the manner in which our rulers have behaved during the commotions in France: and their late declaration of war shews that they are incapable of imitating such generosity. But it is congenial to the character of the British nation. The hearts of the people are in perfect unison with the measures of Government

ment towards France ; and, in the same spirit of generosity which has guided the public counsels, with a firmness which only the generous possess, the voice of the nation thus speaks to its enemies. “ Although we do not attempt to impose upon others our form of government, we are not jealous of its being communicated ; and we shall rejoice if you at length attain that security and prosperity which we already possess. We wish you to be like us, because we know that you will then be happy. But we will not tread in your steps, because you have shewn us that they lead to wretchedness. We will anxiously avoid every approach to the rapidity and violence, with which your Government has of late undergone a succession of changes, to the domination of your demagogues, and to the caprice and fury of the mob which overawes your Convention. And while to the fanaticism, the despair, and the want which have driven you to arms, the host, whom we have sent forth against you, will oppose in the field the steady courage formed by a sense of the value of what they defend, you shall continue to behold on this side of the Channel, a nation united in reverence for the laws, in loyalty to their sovereign, and in the firm purpose of maintaining that subordination of ranks, which they know to be the best guard of liberty : a nation whom your insidious arts did not corrupt, whom your boasting did not intimidate, and whom your

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example has confirmed in attachment to that constitution of which, with an envious eye, and an usurping hand, you attempted to rob us."

II. When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every approach to impurity.

In polished states, the succession of peaceful occurrences is not favourable to the sentiment of religion. When there are no visible marks of the interposition of the Almighty, men, accustomed to exercise their sagacity in investigating the springs which move human affairs, forget that those springs are only means employed by Him, ' who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will.' Amidst the many new objects of attention and desire, created by the improvements of art and science, the enquiries and controversies which constituted the learning of former times are regarded as unimportant. Amidst the multiplicity of the business and enjoyments of this life, the thoughts of another vanish. Many who believe in Christ do not think themselves obliged to make a profession of their faith; while others are led by reasonings, the fallacy of which they cannot detect, or by passions that are impatient of restraint, to indulge the same wantonness of profanity, as if it were now demonstrated and universally believed, that religion is false.

But any signal alteration upon the course of human affairs, tends to revive in every breast an impression of the Supreme Being; and, amongst communities of men, the same events which call forth an attachment to the state, correct the giddiness and presumption which long tranquillity often inspires, and produce a public acknowledgement of the Ruler of nations. When the host goeth forth against the enemy, there is hardly any man, while his eyes follow the bark which carries them to the scene of danger, who does not address to heaven a vow for their safety. The more intimately that his fortune is linked with theirs, his prayers are the more earnest and the more frequent; and the children, the wives, the companions, and friends of those who remain at home, are commended to heaven with a voice too strong to be drowned by the intoxication of pleasure, or the refinements of false philosophy.— The host, however brave and well-directed, cannot command success; for the wisdom of the wise has often been confounded, and the arm of the mighty broken, while rashness and misconduct have gained a bloodless victory. Fleets, which covered the face of the deep, and advanced in the pride of conquest, have been shattered or dispersed by a storm: And upon land, He who is ‘the father of the rain, in ‘whose hand are the treasures of snow and hail, who ‘can divide a water-course for the overflowing of wa-

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' ter, and a way for the lightning of thunder,' brings forth these his ministers ' in the time of trouble, in ' the day of battle, and of war, and sends them for cor- ' rection or for mercy, to do whatever he com- ' mands.'

Those antient nations, the history of whose war-like exploits early engages the admiration of every cultivated mind, acknowledged, amidst the splendour and extent of their conquests, that the sword which they so ably wielded was not sufficient to ensure them victory. Even their unenlightened minds recognized, in the day of battle, a power superior to their own; and they sought him blindly after the manner of their fathers. In place of the processions and costly offerings, which with them formed a part of the pomp of war, in place of the many victims which they slew before the host went forth, and the vows by which they attempted to purchase the favour of their gods, we have been taught to substitute the more rational service which our Gracious Sovereign hath called us this day to perform. But we have also learnt that it is not merely the spreading forth of the hands of a whole nation, with which the Father of Spirits is delighted. By commanding the sword to be unsheathed, he means to bring back the hearts of his children to himself: And we do indeed understand the doing of the Lord, if it produces amongst all ranks an habitual acknowledgement of

his Providence, a small respect for the institutions of religion, and the various expressions of unfeigned devotion. Did the sentiment of piety, cherished by the services of this day, become thus vigorous and universal, it would preserve the people of Great Britain united in attachment to the constitution, and submission to the laws ; it would promote the practice of every domestic and every public virtue ; it would inspire courage in the hour of danger ; and it would soothe our minds with the hope of a favourable answer to the supplications which we present for the safety of those who are dear to us.

The sentiment which we this day express, has been exploded by our enemies. The new government of France very early taught the people a lesson of impiety, by the public profanation of that day, which has been honoured by the Christian world ever since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. A contempt of the Gospel, and a disbelief in the being of God have been avowed with impunity, and with general applause, in their National Convention. Amidst the tumultuous joy inspired by their successes last summer, the song of Liberty, was substituted, by authority, in place of that hymn by which the French nation had for ages express, upon similar occasions, their gratitude to heaven. Amidst the disasters and the consternation of this spring, the voice of supplication has not been addrest to the Lord of hosts.

Bigotry

Bigotry has been sometimes represented as peculiar to religious sects. But it is well known, that a blind prepossession in favour of particular tenets, devotedness to a party, and zeal for making proselytes, have characterized the infidels of every age : And our enemies, by conjoining bigotry with the avowed dereliction of every religious sentiment, have only exhibited a national example of what has often been remarked in individuals, That the farther a man departs from the sentiments of human nature, and the received opinions of his neighbours, he is the more solicitous to obtain a sanction for the singularity of his system by gaining some converts. The French philosophers, in whose theories inference and conjecture were skilfully blended with a slender portion of facts, and who made many discoveries without forming a just comprehension of the whole system of nature, had long tarnished their fame, and impaired the pleasure and advantage which Europe derived from their writings, by introducing, under every form of composition that issued from their pen, insidious attacks upon religion, in which the sophistry of their reasoning was veiled from ordinary eyes, under a specious covering of eloquence, ridicule, and misrepresentation. The vigilance with which the antient government guarded the established religion, had produced some degree of reserve in the method of conducting those attacks, and opposed to their

their influence the antient prejudices which it cherished. But under the new order of things, the philosophers, some of whom were raised to a share of the supreme power, by obtaining the direction of the primary schools, and of the other institutions for national instruction, were enabled to employ the most effectual means of disseminating their own principles within the territory of France : And when their armies went forth to spread insurrections throughout Europe, and to exercise, in every state where they could find admittance, what they call the Revolutionary Power, there was opened an object the most flattering to philosophical bigotry. The impression that had been made upon the minds of men, by the writings of the philosophers, was succeeded by the terror of arms, whose progress appeared for sometime to be irresistible. The soldiers of the Republic received a commission to advance through the world as the apostles of Atheism ; and wherever the despotic will of a French general was to introduce the liberty and equality of France, there the antient monuments of religion were to fall, amidst the wreck of the former Government.

If ever there was a war which deserved the name of a holy war, it is that in which we are now engaged. We fight not for disputed tenets, concerning which there may be a difference of opinion amongst them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity ;

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not for ceremonies of worship, or forms of church government, in which the kingdom of Christ does not consist : but we fight in defence of the fundamental principles of religion, that ‘ God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’ For it is not against a corrupt form of Christianity that the arms of France are directed : It is against the name of Christ : It is against the sovereignty of the Lord of nature : It is against those principles engraven on the heart of man, which we cherish as our consolation in the time of trouble, as our guide and our counsellor amidst the difficulties of life, as the strength and the rejoicing of our heart. If it were possible for the success of the arms of France to equal the wildness of her ambition, there would be established throughout Europe, as far as the iron hand of power could establish a creed so monstrous, that gloomy system which, banishing mind from the universe, deprives the fairest forms in nature of their chief beauty ; which, leaving opprest innocence without an avenger, and measuring all human efforts by the narrow span of time, checks every magnanimous exertion ; and which, withdrawing the actions of man from the controul of an Almighty Lawgiver, delivers him to be the slave of appetite, and the sport or the victim of every furious passion.

God forbid that any of the enormities of the wars which, in former times, assumed the name of holy, should

should disgrace that which we wage. We know and we respect the rights of conscience ; we believe that ‘ the wrath of men worketh not the righteousness of God ;’ we wish not to impose upon our enemies a similarity to our faith ; and in whatever manner the effects of their impiety may be allowed by the Almighty to chastise them, we shall think that we have done all that is incumbent upon us for promoting their conversion, when we second our prayers, by giving them an example of the salutary effects, which the fear of God produces upon the character of a nation.—But let a sense of the danger to which religion was exposed, by the progress of their arms, unite our efforts to guard the sacred treasure ; and while the host goeth forth against them, let us who remain at home raise an internal defence against the establishment of their principles in this Island. Let Philosophy and sound criticism, acting in their noblest office, as the handmaids of religion, lend their assistance to illustrate her divine original, to vindicate her doctrines from mis-representation, and to repel the attacks of those ‘ who speak evil of what they do not understand.’ Let the young and the uninformed give some credit to the wisdom of ages, and to the names of the many enlightened men who have stood forth as the Champions of the faith of Christ ; and, instead of rashly abandoning the system in which they were educated, let them stay to enquire

quire whether some of the difficulties which they are unable to solve have not often received a satisfying answer, whether many of the objections which those who, presuming upon the ignorance of their hearers, urge with a petulant dogmatical tone, have not been found, upon a thorough investigation, to illustrate and confirm the truth of what, upon a superficial view, they seemed to overturn. Let the rich and great bow with reverence before that Lord ‘ who ‘ pulleth down one, and setteth up another,’ by whose appointment they are made to differ from their neighbours, and upon the general acknowledgements of whose sovereignty depends the security of their privileges. Let the poor retain the knowledge of religion as a treasure better than the world can give ; and let them ‘ commit the keeping of their souls to ‘ Him who is their portion, their Protector, and ‘ their exceeding great reward.’ Let all the disciples of Christ recognize this as the season when he calls upon those who love him, ‘ to confess him before men.’ Be not ashamed of him and of his words because some have denied him. But let ‘ their hard speeches ‘ and their ungodly deeds,’ stir up your souls to honour his name. ‘ Remember the Sabbath day to ‘ keep it holy. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. Search the scriptures which testify of Jesus.’ Without resuming the gloomy, censorious, intolerant spirit which, in other days, was a

form of godliness, but with ‘the meekness and ‘gentleness of the Master whose steps you follow,’ make ‘your light so to shine before men,’ that the world may take knowledge of you, that you belong to that family which is named of Christ.

Let a firm faith in the superintending Providence of God establish our minds in perfect tranquillity with regard to the issue of the present contest. ‘The ‘floods may lift up their voice : But the Lord on ‘high is mightier than the noise of many waters. ‘He stilleth the tumult of the people that rise up ‘against Him. The pillars of the earth are the ‘Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them. ‘He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked ‘shall be silent in darkness ; for by strength shall ‘no man prevail. Arise, O God, plead thine ‘own cause. Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the ‘earth ; that men may know that Thou whose ‘name alone is Jehovah art the most High over all ‘the earth. Surely the wrath of man shall praise ‘thee ; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.’”

III. When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every kind of immorality.

The present improved state of society delivers us from the rude manners of our Ancestors, and from some of the enormities of former times. But it has

a tendency to beget other vices very inconsistent with the perfection of the human character. Those who are nourished in the lap of ease, to whom the increase of wealth and the refinements of art afford various means of enjoyment, are in danger of contracting an inattention to every thing serious, and of adopting a loose and easy system of morality, which, by confining the duties of man to a few points, giyes a licence to the gratification of inordinate desire. Those who subsist by industry are apt to pine at beholding the splendour and gaieties of persons exempted, by their condition, from the necessity of labour : And in the progress of national prosperity, there is spread through all ranks a spirit of dissipation, which often involves in difficulties, which sometimes leads to crimes, and which always leaves little leisure for the improvement of the understanding, and the culture of virtuous affection.

This growing spirit is rebuked by every interruption of national tranquillity. War is a time of re-collection, when the dangers to which our friends and our country are exposed, correct the extravagance of mirth, and recal the mind to serious thought. War is a time of frugality, when the advanced price of many articles of consumption obliges persons of limited incomes to retrench their expences ; and when public spirit or compassion, counteract the love of pleasure by diverting the superfluity of the rich

into more useful channels. War is a season of exertion, when many are summoned, by the command of the state, or by the voice of honour, from that indolence which enervates their powers, and fosters sensual desire, to engage in a perilous service; when the preparations for that service occupy the public counsels, call forth into action a variety of talents, and create in every department a multiplicity of business; when the minds of the great body of the people, rouzed from the languor of peace, are interested and instructed by the succession of events.

The goods and ills of human life, in some degree, counterbalance one another. While war is productive of some of the heaviest calamities with which the human race is visited, and while the corruption of the national character is to be numbered amongst the aggravated evils which arise from the long continuance of war, an occasional interruption of peace may administer a wholesome medicine to that depravity of manners which is incident to a great commercial Nation. He who, by his providence and his word, leads us in the way in which we ought to walk, and who with a Father's love watches over our most important interests, commands the sword to leave its scabbard, that it may chastise the abuse of the blessings of peace; and by sending this judgement upon our land, he is now calling 'the inhabitants thereof to learn righteousness.'

The

The host has gone forth against an enemy who have exhibited the human character, in a light more humiliating and more abominable, than the history of man has presented for many ages. The contrast to their vices forms of itself an excellent directory of good conduct ; and the best way to conquer them is to be unlike them.

Let the men of rank in this country avoid that profligacy of manners, by which the higher orders in France rendered themselves odious and contemptible. Let them maintain that elevation of sentiment, and that true dignity of conduct, which become their birth, their fortune, and their privileges ; let them display that solicitude for the public interest, and that attention to the employment, the instruction, and the consolation of their fellow-subjects, which is the duty of their station : And let every part of their behaviour discover, that they have more satisfaction in ‘ condescending to men of low estate,’ in relieving the distressed, in promoting plans of general utility, and in contributing to the welfare of the community, than in vain parade and frivolous expence. We shall then honour them as the stewards of God, faithful in that which he hath committed to their trust. We shall acknowledge the wisdom of the destination of Providence, which employs an unequal distribution of wealth, as the means of diffusing a larger portion of happiness and improvement, and which by

establishing the distinctions of rank, invites every man to study to excel. We shall rely upon their wisdom and their exertions as one of the bulwarks of the state : And we shall defend their privileges as the security of our own.

Let those who, in the unexampled prosperity of this country, have attained to wealth, by eminence in the liberal arts, by extended plans of commerce, and by improvements in manufactures, guard against that gross luxury which often follows after sudden riches, and those supercilious manners by which persons who have left the rank in which they were born, sometimes remind an intelligent observer from whence they sprung. Let them always be ready to encourage the exertions of those who are entering upon the path in which they have been successful ; and whatever station they may reach, if they cannot preserve the same simplicity of manners, let them carry with them the same truth and honesty by which they were brought forward.

Let those who earn their bread by labour, prize the blessings of that condition which Providence hath assigned them. Do not think, my beloved friends, that any kind of gain is to you so safe and so happy, as that which you derive from honest industry, and which you share with those whom you love : And believe that the apostle of Jesus consulted the health of your bodies, the peace of your minds, and the

prosperity of your families, when he exhorted you
 ‘ to be quiet, and to do your own busines, working
 ‘ with your own hands that which is good.’ If any
 thing could increase the respect which you feel for
 the apostolical precept, it is the present condition of
 that nation by whom it has been despised. Plunder
 and massacre supply for a season the idle tumultuous
 inhabitants of Paris. ‘ But that resource will soon
 be exhausted, for it works its own destruction ; and
 the corruption and wretchedness which it spreads
 amongst those who have shared in it most largely, are
 a more public exemplification than the world ever
 beheld, of the truth and significancy of these words
 which you have read in your bibles. ‘ Better is a
 ‘ little with the fear of God, than great treasure and
 ‘ trouble therewith. A little that a righteous man
 ‘ hath is better than the riches of many wicked ; for
 ‘ the arms of the wicked shall be broken, and their
 ‘ fword shall enter into their own heart. The curse
 ‘ of the Lord is in the house of the wicked ; but he
 ‘ blesseth the habitation of the just.’

Let all orders of subjects study to maintain that
 inoffensive, righteous, and beneficent conduct which
 is characteristical of the disciples of Christ. ‘ Here-
 ‘ in exercise yourselves to have always a conscience
 ‘ void of offence towards God and towards man.’
 Shew a sacred regard to the principles of justice in
 all

all your intercourse with one another. ‘ Speak ye
 ‘ the truth every man to his neighbour. Execute
 ‘ the judgment of truth and peace in your gates :
 ‘ And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts
 ‘ against his neighbour, and love no false oath : for
 ‘ all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.’—
 Suppress the first emotions of envy, that wretched
 malevolent sentiment, which is fostered by idleness,
 and which, proceeding upon false superficial views,
 is more cruel and outrageous than any other passion.
 If you are wise enough to avail yourselves of your
 own advantages, if you know how to extract out of
 your own condition the good which it is fitted to af-
 ford, and if you cultivate that substantial happiness
 which every man, whether he be rich or poor, may
 find in the security of a devout mind, in the ease and
 cheerfulness of a contented spirit, in the testimony
 of a good conscience, and in the joy of a benevolent
 heart, then, instead of that evil eye with which many
 behold their neighbour, you will derive a real acce-
 sion to your own happiness from his prosperity, and
 • you will have to give to him that needeth.’ Hold
 in abhorrence the savageness of those who trample
 upon the peace and the security of their neighbours,
 when it stands in the way of the gratification of their
 ungovernable passions. Believe that every senti-
 ment which leads you to violate the rights of your
 neigh-

neighbour, is destructive of your own happiness ; and do not allow yourselves to think that any object is to you so important, or any interest so dear, as the preserving in your own breasts the temper of a Christian, and the exhibiting in your lives the various expressions of that divine principle, which ‘ suffereth long, and is kind, which doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.’

True public spirit embraces all the branches of morality which I have thus slightly touched. For virtue is the strength and the security of a state. By forming the mind to fortitude, activity, and perseverance, it qualifies the members to defend the blessings which they possess ; and by inspiring affection and mutual confidence, it gives firmness and energy to those who are united in a good cause. But vice is weakness. It renders every hand feeble and every heart faint. It converts man into a selfish animal, who lives purely for his own gratification : And if it does often unite men of similar characters in pursuing a joint interest, or in following the impulse of a common passion, yet by filling their breasts with suspicion and jealousy, it enervates all their operations ; it prepares the dissolution of that association which it had formed ; and at length it scatters the associates, every man to seek shelter for himself, without feel-

ing any obligation to cover from infamy or from danger those whom he has deserted and betrayed.— Vice is a principle of dissatisfaction and turbulence.

‘ The wicked are like the troubled sea when it can-
 ‘ not rest. They feel no quietness within ;’ and seek, by incessant changes, to fly from that wretchedness which they must ever carry about with them, because it results from a state of mind that poisons the comfort of every condition. But ‘ a good man is satisfied out of himself. The fruit of
 ‘ righteousness is sown in peace ;’ and they who are guided by ‘ the wisdom that is from above, shew out
 ‘ of a good conversation their works with meekness
 ‘ of wisdom.’—In vice, too, there is a propagation of weakness. If one generation is taken away before their wickedness has received the full measure of national correction, the children, accustomed to hear religion and patriotism treated with scorn, and early initiated in all the depravity of the parents, are still less capable of averting the evils which have been prepared for them. But virtue is transmitted from Father to Son, the most precious part of that ‘ in-
 ‘ heritance which a good man leaves to his child-
 ‘ ren’s children !’ If the people of Great Britain, warned by the present war, ‘ keep themselves from
 ‘ every wicked thing,’ they will keep their children also ; for their counsels and their example will train a succeeding race in the love of the Constitution,

‘ in

‘ in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,’ and in the practice of righteousness.

We shall, ere long, be gathered to our Fathers, and those who come in our place will have to defend against future aggressions the venerable fabric which we now guard. Let us, then, tell the towers of Zion to the generation following. ‘ Let us accustom them to mark well her bulwarks, and to consider her palaces.’ Amidst our solicitude to prepare them for the business of life, let us never forget that ‘ the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ;’ and as we would wish to inspire their tender breasts with the hatred of all that is false, mean, and cruel, and with the love of every manly, humane, and generous sentiment, let us teach them ‘ to remember their Creator in the days of their youth.’ Then we may hope, that the Lord our God who has been with us, as he was with our fathers, will be also with our children. We shall leave behind us a race furnished with that intelligence, that manliness, and public spirit, by which our ancestors were distinguished, and by which, under God, the liberties of this land were established : And in the character of the minds which we rear, we shall form and we shall transmit a delightful pledge, that this Island will continue to latest ages the fair seat of regulated freedom, of rational religion and of public virtue.

‘ Look

"Look down from heaven, O God of hosts,
 and behold and visit this vine; The vineyard
 which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch
 which thou madest strong for thyself. Let thy
 work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory un-
 to their children. Then shall our land yield her
 increase. The seed also of thy servants shall in-
 herit it; and they that love thy name shall dwell
 therein! Amen.



F I N I S.